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PUBLIC SERVANT

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL

Gregory A. Brower, The **Government Printing Office**

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Name and title: Gregory A. Brower, general counsel

Age: 43

Company profile: The **Government Printing Office** (GPO) in Washington gathers, catalogs, produces, authenticates and preserves information for the federal government. It has served as the sole printer for all three branches of the government since 1895, when agencies were ordered to bring their printing projects to the GPO unless specifically exempted by Congress. The head of the agency, the public printer of the United States, is appointed by the president and reports to Congress. The GPO has 2,250 employees.

Legal team: Brower heads an 11-member legal department, with eight attorneys, two support staff and a law librarian/paralegal, all of whom are considered employees of Congress.

The team handles most of the work in-house. 'But we do have the world's biggest and best law firm handling outside litigation -- the [U.S.] Department of Justice. And they never send a bill,' Brower said.

One of the office's largest lines of business is the printing of U.S. passports. Recently, the office has been tied up in litigation over the addition to new passports of a computer chip containing the holder's personal data. 'A chip-maker who was not awarded a contract to provide chips for the new passport filed a bid protest in the Court of Federal Claims,' Brower said. 'The Department of Justice represented us and prevailed, and now the case is on appeal.'

As a federal agency, the GPO doesn't engage in pro bono work. 'However, we do encourage our lawyers to engage in pro bono work on an individual basis and as allowed by federal law,' he said.

'As for diversity hiring, the federal government has long been at the forefront of efforts to recruit and retain a diverse work force. Like many federal agencies, GPO has a significant percentage of female and minority employees,' Brower said.

Daily duties: Brower's team handles administrative and employment litigation, in court and before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Merit Systems Protection Board, a quasi-judicial agency created to shield civil servants from political pressure. This line of work includes terminations and employee disciplinary proceedings, as well as discrimination complaints.

Additionally, 'We spend a lot of time on procurement law issues and government

contract issues,' Brower said. 'We are doing nearly three-quarters of a billion dollars in business every year, and we are entering into hundreds of printing contracts every day.' His office doesn't get involved in every contract, 'but the bigger ones we are.'

Another priority is ethics counseling for agency employees.

'My day consists of a mix between managing the various litigation areas pending -- putting out any fires that come up during the day, advising senior management on a wide variety of issues, ethics and strategy, and doing a lot of counseling with our human resource professionals,' Brower said.

When litigation does arise, Brower's team serves as co-counsel to Justice Department attorneys.

Route to present position: Between earning his undergraduate degree in political economy from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1986, and his law degree at George Washington University Law School in 1992, Brower spent two years on active duty as a surface warfare officer in the U.S. Navy.

'Everything I know about management I learned during my time in the Navy,' he said.

After law school, Brower spent two years as a litigation associate at San Francisco's Ropers, Majeski, Kohn & Bently. He then moved back to his home state, Nevada, where he worked from 1994 to 1999 as a litigation associate at Laxalt & Nomura, a boutique firm in Reno, on products liability, employment and insurance cases. Later he moved to Jones Vargas and made partner, litigating general tort, commercial and administrative cases from that firm's Reno and Las Vegas offices.

Brower, a Republican, parlayed an interest in public service into two terms in the Nevada Legislature, representing an Assembly district that included parts of Reno, Carson City and the Lake Tahoe area from 1998 to 2002.

'By way of my service in the Legislature, I had the opportunity to serve on a variety of state and nationwide task forces and commissions concerning criminal sentencing, prison reform and juvenile justice,' he said.

In 2003, Brower jumped at an offer to join the Justice Department, where his duties included implementing the USA Patriot Act.

'I worked with 93 U.S. attorneys around the country to coordinate and communicate various policy issues that were pending in Congress,' Brower said. 'I have always been interested in public service and, although reluctant to leave Nevada and my law firm, I felt strongly about doing my part to help fight the war on terror. When confronted with the opportunity to join [the Justice Department], I couldn't pass it up.'

A year later, Brower was recruited to become the inspector general of the GPO.

'I was tasked by statute with overseeing all internal audits and investigations relating to their agencies' operations,' he said. 'I had a staff of about 25, which included both auditors, who did internal audit activity, and a group of investigators, who conducted internal criminal investigations.'

Brower missed the work of a lawyer, however, so when the office's longtime general counsel retired, Brower stepped into the position in October 2006.

'It's nice to be in a traditional lawyer's role again,' he said. 'I'm dealing with a lot of the issues I am familiar with from the private sector -- managing litigation and counseling my client on a variety of different matters.'

Personal: Brower and his wife Loren, an elementary school teacher, are the parents of two girls, Hayley, 11, and Kaitlin, 9.

Most of his spare time goes into activities with his children, who both are competitive swimmers. He also enjoys golf and tennis.

Last book and movie: War Letters, by Andrew Carroll. 'It's a collection of letters written by servicemen to their family and friends for all of the nation's wars,' he said.

Brower figures the last movie he's seen probably was something he and his children caught on the Disney Channel.

'I think it is the 10th year in a row that my wife and I observed that we haven't seen even one of the Oscar-nominated films,' he said.

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